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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 002932

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: A TROUBLED BJP TURNS TO THE RIGHT

REF: A. NEW DELHI 2140

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 2095

[1](#)C. NEW DELHI 1712

[1](#)D. 04 NEW DELHI 6042

Classified By: Charge Robert O. Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Facing multiple crises, including electoral lethargy, growing ideological divides and an uncertain leadership succession, t Vajpayee has not made his intentions known, but may have trouble keeping the Hindutva forces in check. End Summary.
The Modi Imbroglio

[1](#)2. (U) The BJP reacted harshly to the revocation of Chief Minister Narendra Modi's visa by the USG, and he continues to paint himself as a

[1](#)3. (U) The visa revocation set off a series of anti-American diatribes by BJP columnists, led by the pro-BJP "'Pioneer,'" which attempted t

[1](#)4. (U) Going a step further, other BJP columnists accused the US of hypocrisy," dredging up alleged American sins from Hiroshima, Vietnam,

[1](#)5. (C) As the leading opposition party the BJP has also recently taken several policy stances that oppose US positions. While in power, t
Back to Ayodhya

[1](#)6. (U) Addressing the BJP's 25th anniversary celebration in New Delhi on April 5, Advani blamed the party's 2004 electoral defeat on party
Deep Splits

[1](#)7. (U) The BJP has also been plagued with public spats. In the first week of April, a group of high-ranking BJP leaders from Gujarat met w
They also claimed to have the tacit backing of the RSS and VHP.

[1](#)8. (U) Much more significantly, in an April 10 television broadcast RSS Chief KS Sudarshan called on both Advani and former PM Vajpayee to

[1](#)9. (U) On April 12, VHP leaders Giriraj Kishore and Vishnu Hari Dalmiya supported Sudarshan's stance, urged Advani and Vajpayee to retire,
Succession Struggle

[1](#)10. (U) While BJP infighting is ideological, it is also a succession struggle between contending personalities.

Political insiders expect Vajpayee and Advani to leave active politics within the next two years. Vajpayee's own statements make his departu
[1](#)11. (U) The RSS and VHP have clear preferences regarding who should replace Vajpayee and Advani. Modi is the favorite of both groups to
In the same interview where he attacked Vajpayee, Sudarshan said Bharati is "'obstinate'" and "'behaves like a child.'"

[1](#)12. (U) The BJP's moderate wing de-emphasizes Hindutva in favor of pragmatism, international diplomacy, and creating a good climate for i
Modi's Supporters

[1](#)13. (C) Poloff recently met with BJP leaders who agreed that there is lingering resentment within the party regarding Modi's visa denial.

[1](#)14. (C) Like other BJP interlocutors, MP Yijayendra Pal Singh praised Modi for providing "'good governance'" to Gujarat and "'turning arc

[1](#)15. (C) RSS leader and BJP national executive member Seshadri Chari claimed that there was "'universal anger'" in the party regarding US
Skeptical on the South Asia Initiative

[1](#)16. (C) The BJP leaders also dismissed the Secretary's offer "'to help make India a world power'" as "'patronizing,'" insisting that Indi

[1](#)17. (C) As expected, all BJP interlocutors condemned the US offer of F-16's to Pakistan. Kohli noted that the BJP viewed the offer with
Agreement on Economy and Kashmir

[1](#)18. (C) Kohli was more supportive on other issues. He maintained that the BJP and USG stances on VAT, the Patent Bill, and Kashmir bus c
Accusing the GOI of "'irresponsibility,'" he blamed the BJP's opposition on UPA failure to negotiate in good faith during a series of high-le
Party Infighting

[1](#)19. (C) BJP leaders refused to comment on the party's succession struggle. Kohli regretted that "'internal matters'" are being played ou

[1](#)20. (C) Chari agreed that the hostility between the Sangh Parivar and the BJP leadership was "'nothing new,'" insisting that the party w

Comment

[1](#)21. (C) Sangh Parivar discontent and bitterness percolates just below the surface and periodically breaks into the open, causing speculat

[1](#)22. (C) Despite or perhaps because of his reputation as an international pariah, Modi has emerged for now as the figurehead for the Sangh
BLAKE "